DOCTRINE AND LIFE

"Unto the praise of the glory of his grace."—EPH. 1:6

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The Love of God*

A. Sertillanges, O.P.

The love of God gives its unity to life. It is the principle of organisation,—the order, the Wisdom that presided at the creation of the world.

We have within us a principle of anarchy. Our being is manifold; it is our task, with so many conflicting tendencies, to give the mastery to our essential self, our superior self, which tends upwards.

The external world is manifold, distracting because it pulls us in various directions: we have to choose.

The succession of life is manifold: youth, maturity, old age, each proposes its ideal.

These three complexities combine in endless variety.

And yet life is frighteningly short; we must not lose the least part of it nor leave half our personality behind on the journey.

Reason is our guide, but reason itself needs to be guided. Principles do not guide us effectively until they have become tendencies, living habits of action, purposes striving after realisation —in a word, until we love.

But if we give our love haphazardly, we scatter our energies. If we love some definite objects, that is a beginning of order. There is real order if we have one supreme, dominating love. That is the love of God.

Love of God is not a principle of exclusion, but of universality. Even if it is less lively, less keenly felt, it is above everything and excludes nothing.

* Notes of two sermons preached at St. Jacques-du-Haut-Pas, Paris, January 1914

We must love God, and everything in Him; not everything at random, but everything that reflects His goodness,—everything that in one way or another brings us nearer to Him: by counsel, support, sympathy, encouragement, example, contact, beauty. . . .

We have only to renounce what is less good for what is better.

* * * *

The love of God is the only love capable of filling our life and of being an organising principle.

In its highest form this love makes us love God in Himself, because He *is;* it makes us adore and praise Him; and because of our insufficiency we adore and praise Him with and through the Church and all the faithful. This love makes us desire God's glory above all things, even at the price of all that we have and are.

Therefore, when we can no longer stay with Him, in His presence, the love of zeal makes us leave Him: but so as to find Him again in action, by working for His glory.

It makes us accept His will fully, both passively and actively, both suffering and action: it makes us resign ourselves to whichever He wills. It makes us live daily in the company of Christ, studying His life more deeply, getting to know Him better.

This love gives a personal, intense, absorbing life to the soul. It lifts us above material conditions, earthly considerations; it consumes the body. It gives times of unspeakable joy and of mortal distress: joy when we glimpse God, distress because of our dullness, coldness, sluggishness, cowardice, moral wretchedness. But we must accept everything, even our wretchedness, which, by God's permission, detaches us from ourselves.

And then there are moments, rare moments, of quietude. St. Augustine says that where there is love there is no pain, or if there is pain, we love the pain. 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven': this love will give us heaven on earth.

At the evening of life it is in love they will examine thee.— St. John of the Cross.

What is a Christian?

CORNELIUS WILLIAMS, O.P.

IN THE early Church the followers of Our Lord generally referred to themselves as 'the brethren' or 'the disciples'. The Jews who refused to recognize Our Lord called these faithful disciples of Jesus 'the Nazarenes'. They were called *Christians* for the first time by the Greeks of Antioch. The name was given by the Greeks to what seemed to men a fanatical sect, whose members were bound together by one outstanding characteristic: devotion to the person Christ—Christ, who, some years before, had been crucified as a common criminal by the Jews. Attachment to the person of Christ, to the historical person of Christ, was *the* distinguishing mark of the early Christians. It should be the distinguishing mark of the Christians of all times. The primary pre-occupation of the true Christian is not with a particular manner or philosophy of life but with the person of Jesus of Nazareth as revealed to us in the Gospel and Tradition. If we have grasped that idea we have grasped the essence of Christianity. If we analyse this notion we will have gone a long way to understanding what St. Paul meant when he taught that Christ was his life: 'for me to live is Christ'.

* * * *

No sooner had Adam sinned against God—and in the person of Adam all mankind—than God promised a Redeemer, who should come in the fullness of time and, making satisfaction to God, restore man to friendship with God (Gen. 3:14). In this hope mankind lived from generation to generation. The promise was renewed to the Chosen People of Israel time and time again down the ages. The Patriarchs and Prophets were God's messengers to men, announcing the One that was to come in order to bring peace and salvation to mankind. Then, at the appointed time, God sent the promised Redeemer to be the fulfilment of all the prophecies. 'God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke, in the times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all, in these days hath spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all

things, by whom also he made the world. Who being the brightness of his glory, and the figure of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, making purgation of sins, sitteth on the right hand of the majesty on high' (Hebr. 1:1-3).

A cursory reading of the Scriptures brings home to us the great difference there is between the Son sent 'in these days' and the prophets sent 'in times past'. The prophets were mere messengers. They were the mouthpieces of God and pointers towards God. Their raison d'être was to bring a message and then disappear from the scene. Christ, on the other hand, appears as the very centre of his own teaching and of his own message. He does not say after the manner of the prophets of old, 'Thus saith the Lord,' but 'I say unto you'. To the astonishment of all his hearers he speaks 'as one having power' and authority. He is no mere messenger of the King. He is the King of all because He is God.

* * * *

Because Christ is God he can lay claim to men's minds. He demands that men attach themselves to him, to his person, as to their Lord, their Master and their Leader. They must *believe* him, have faith in him. He even makes this acceptance of himself the condition of salvation and of life everlasting, 'Amen I say to you, everyone that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake: shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall possess life everlasting'. And again: 'I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, although he be dead, shall live: and every one that liveth, and believeth in me, shall not die forever' (John 11:25-26). He does not say that everyone that giveth up all for GOD'S sake, or for HIS FATHER'S sake, but for *his own sake*. He does not say, 'He that believeth in GOD', but, 'He that believeth in *me*'. On the Last Day men will be judged in the first instance according to their acceptance or non-acceptance of the person of Jesus, according to their loyalty or disloyalty to him. 'He that shall be ashamed of me and of my words, the Son of Man also will be ashamed of him, when he shall come in the glory of his Father with the holy angels' (Mark 8:38).

Not only does Jesus demand of men the intellectual acceptance in

faith of his person and his cause, he also demands their love and service. He reproaches the Jews for not loving him and points to that as a sign that they do not love God their Father. 'If God were your Father, you would indeed love me'. (John 8:42). This love for him must be proved by deeds, that is, by obedience to his commandments, by submission to his will. It must be a love that proves itself by service. For love without service is only love in name, and service without love is no more than servitude. 'If you love me, keep my commandments'.

It is not a mere natural love that Jesus demands of his followers. It is such that every other human and natural love must be subordinated to it. It is boundless, it is a love for him above everyone and everything else. 'He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me' (Matt. 10:37). And even more forcibly still he demands that we be ready to *renounce* all natural love in order to attach ourselves to him: 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple' (Luke 14:26).

* * * *

Claiming our faith and love, Jesus Christ also demands that we follow in his footsteps, that we model our lives on his life on earth. 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father, but by me' (John 14:6). He is the light pointing out our path, which, if followed will inevitably bring us to Life Eternal. 'I am the light of the world: he that followeth me, walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life' (John 8:12). Our rule of conduct, then, is no longer some ethical code or moral law. It is no longer the rule of right reason alone. It is something much more vital, much more personal and consequently something much more simple. It is the following or imitation of Jesus Christ, of the living historical Christ. *Specifically christian holiness consists in transposing into our own lives the virtues shown forth in the life, passion and death of our Saviour.* Faith in the person of Jesus and an earnest love for Him urges us to follow His example. We always tend to imitate those whom we love. Hence the great importance of meditating constantly on the life of Our Divine Lord, not in order to acquire a greater knowledge of Sacred

Scripture, not in order to know much about him, but in order *to know him* more intimately and in order to fill our minds and hearts with his spirit. In this way will Christ really and effectually become the centre of our daily lives. All our thoughts and affections will have him as their object. In everything we do that which was done by Christ will be our example. Remember his words to the disciples, after washing their feet: 'I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also' (John 13:14-15).

Everything that Christ said and did during his life on earth was intended for our instruction and imitation. However, it is true to say with St. Thomas that, 'amongst all that Christ did and suffered during his mortal life, the example of his most holy Cross is, above all other things, proposed to Christians for their imitation'.[1] 'Calling the multitude together with his disciples he said to them: If any man will follow me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me' (Mark 10:34). Our Lord addresses here the 'multitude', that is all Christians. If they really wish to follow him and go to God (there is no other way but through Him), then they *must* carry their cross. It is no mere counsel. It is a command, a fundamental law of the spiritual life and of Christian perfection. As it was not fitting that Christ should enter into his glory without first having suffered, so neither can we enter into the glory of Heaven without being signed with the sign of the Cross. The Cross is our passport to Heaven.

On this earth the great object of our lives—of our faith, of our love, of our prayer and contemplation—is not precisely God as he is in himself, it is not the divinity as such. It is God in human form, it is God made Man, Our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the proportionate object of our lives here below, on our way to Heaven and the Beatific Vision where we shall see God face to face. In this sense we can speak of 'Christocentrism'. But in using this term we must always bear in mind that Jesus Christ is essentially Mediator, he is essentially the Way. We go to God through him.

Meditation on the humanity of Christ is, *for us*, the great incentive to devotion. 'Matters concerning the Godhead are, in themselves, the strongest incentive to love and consequently to devotion, because God is supremely lovable. Yet such is the weakness of the human mind that it needs a guiding hand, not only

[1] Contra Retrahentes, etc., C. 15.

to the knowledge, but also to the love of Divine things by means of certain sensible objects known to us. Chief among these is the humanity of Christ, according to the words of the Preface, 'that through knowing God visibly, we may be caught up to the love of things invisible. Wherefore matters relating to Christ's humanity are the chief incentive to devotion, leading us thither as a guiding hand, although devotion itself has for its object matters concerning the Godhead'. Such is the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas (2-2 ae, 82-3 ad 2.).

This is also the teaching of all the great mystics. Blessed Henry Suso puts into the mouth of Eternal Wisdom: 'If thou art wishful to behold Me in My uncreated Divinity, thou must learn how to know and love Me here in My suffering humanity, for this is the speediest way to eternal salvation'. And later on we find the following: 'No one can attain divine exaltation or singular sweetness except by passing through the image of My human abasement and bitterness. The higher one climbs without passing through My humanity, the deeper one falls. My humanity is the way one must go, My Passion, the gate through which one must penetrate, to arrive at that which thou seekest'.[1] The Benedictine mystic, Louis of Blois, writes in much the same tone: 'The Manhood of the most sweet Jesus is the safe way, the very door itself, by which to arrive at his Godhead. In vain will the servant of God aspire to mystical and genuine contemplation, if he will not humbly exercise himself in meditation on the Passion of Our Lord. For unless he has that for his foundation, the higher he tries to rise by contemplation, the lower will he fall, and the more disastrous will be his fall'.[2] In a beautiful chapter of her autobiography, St. Teresa of Avila, pointing out the danger of neglecting the Sacred Humanity of Jesus Christ, even for those who have reached the heights of contemplation, writes: 'I see clearly, and since then have always seen, that if we are to please God, and if he is to give us his great graces, everything must pass through the hands of his most Sacred Humanity, in whom His Majesty said that he is well pleased. I know this by repeated experience: our Lord has told it to me. I have seen clearly that this is the door by which we are to enter, if we would have his supreme Majesty reveal to us his great secrets'. To attempt to contemplate God, without the aid

[1] Little Book of Eternal Wisdom, C. 1 and 2.
[2] A Book of Spiritual Instruction, C. 6.

of the Sacred Humanity is, says St. Teresa, to make 'the soul, as they say, to walk in the air; for it has nothing to rest on, how full soever of God it may think itself to be'.[1]

* * * *

Whilst teaching that the *principal* reason for the Incarnation from God's point of view, was the salvation and the redemption of men, that is, in order to repair the damage done to human nature by the fall of Adam, St. Thomas also finds many other motives, urging God to take unto Himself a human nature and become a man like unto ourselves. One of the most beautiful of these is this: that not only the philosophers and theologians might come to the knowledge and love of God, but also the little ones 'parvuli' of His flock. In other words, in order that it might be easy for all men, high and low, the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated, to know and love their Creator with a personal and even human attachment and love. It is easy and connatural for a man to love a fellow-man, but it is given to very few, if to any at all, to come to a knowledge and love of the Divinity as it is in Itself ('divina altitudo'). No philosopher before the time of Christ, no matter how assiduously he may have tried, ever succeeded in attaining the amount of knowledge of God and of things necessary to attain to God that any poor old ('una vetula') woman has by faith, after the coming of Christ.[2]

[1] Autobiography, C. 22.
[2] Exposituc super Symbolo Apostolorum.

Ask great things and the small things shall be added to you; and ask heavenly things and the earthly shall be added to you.—Traditional saying of Our Lord given by Origen.

On Giving

Robert Ostermann

GIVING is part of loving, just as hoarding is part of desiring. If you wish to be a Christian, you must be a lover and so a giver—with generosity; I mean generosity of the heart. Anyone can give fifty pounds and mean nothing, but only generosity can give six pence and donate the giver himself with the coin. The material gift is only an excuse, a sign. The important thing is the love that passes from soul to soul.

Our vocation, yours and mine, is incomplete, defective, if in our lives there is no generosity. Without it we cannot give ourselves as we are meant to do, so that generosity is not an element tacked capriciously on to a Christian life. It is in that life like the heart is in the body.

In our day we hear a great deal about justice: justice for labour, for the sick, for the underprivileged. But listen to the cries. It is a queer justice, making exclusions and conditions. We hear weak voices calling for justice on behalf of the aristocrat or the rich; or for the lazy, the indolent, the wicked. On the one hand justice is restitution, on the other it becomes punishment.

The reason is that justice is an insufficient motive. If I give only to the poor and the failures, what occurs when the successful invoke my generosity? Justice is not enough. *Justice does not see every need agonizing a man's soul.* This is a vision of things charity alone has.

But charity cannot be fastidious, cannot calculate chances and probabilities like a mathematician. Charity weeps with Christ over the *whole* universe of fallen and unhappy men, not only over a section and not just when it is convenient or comfortable to weep.

We are all poor.

We have nothing of our own.

We are all in debt.

How do we claim a total prerogative over what we have, when it does not belong to us?

St. Augustine writes: 'God rewards dutifulness, not poverty', and points out that Lazarus who was poor, was taken up into

Abraham's bosom; and Abraham was a rich man. The wisdom and prudence of the cautious say, Give to the poor, because he is needy. The rest can take care of themselves.

Our wisdom speaks differently. It is a greater than Augustine who teaches: 'Give to him who asks, and if a man would borrow from thee, do not turn away'. No adjective qualifies that noun for us; it is not, Give to the poor, or the weak, or the worthy: the reason is deeper. Give to *him who asks*, whoever he is; and suddenly it is the face of everyman you see, with neither need nor gratitude, greed nor worth, having anything to add to your decision.

A parsimonious love is a dead love. Whatever we do, we do to or for Christ, and whomever we deny, we deny Christ. There is no escaping this love: 'When you refused it to one of the least of my brethren here, you refused it to me.' But, Lord, who is my brother? . . . .

It is easy to see that without generosity you cannot increase in holiness. Holiness is to be possessed of the Spirit of Christ. This is the Holy Spirit Who is Love. The Spirit drove Christ into the desert, the Spirit later moved Him to Calvary. We ask for this Spirit when we pray.

But God is more than just, or else we are all doomed. God is merciful. There are three great acts of generosity: the creation of man, the Birth of God, the Death of God. But generosity itself is God made Man.

The August number of DOCTRINE AND LIFE will include:

The Presence of the Blessed Trinity in the Just—A. Ciappi, O.P.

The Assumption and the Christian Life—James O'Connell, S.M.A.

The Perfect Man—Joseph Collins, O.P.

The Religious Teacher—Conleth Kearns, O.P.

The Place of Work in the Christian Life

Winefride Nolan

ALTHOUGH Our Lord, when he established His Church, vouched for its eventual triumph by promising that the gates of Hell should not prevail, there are times when it seems that the Evil One is in the ascendant. The doctrines of the Church, since the earliest days of Christianity, have been attacked by heretics. Some of the assaults have been only temporary in their effects, but the great modern heresy of Materialism seems more formidable than any, because people are not aware of its insidious nature. They do not realise that the conclusions which the prophets of Materialism reach are denials of fundamental Christian doctrines.

Take, for example, the labour troubles from which a great part of the world is suffering, socially and economically, today. Voices are constantly raised crying out some slogan, 'peg wages', 'freeze prices,' 'make strikes illegal,' 'improve machinery for arbitration,' all in a futile effort to evolve a state of society in which one class of workers does not, periodically, disrupt essential services or cease the production and distribution of goods. Most of those very people who are concerned to cure this state of affairs, as well as the various classes of workers involved, appear to be totally ignorant of the root cause of these troubles: their rejection of Christian doctrine, and, therefore, their failure to understand the place of work in the Christian ethic. Even many who would call themselves practising Catholics are completely deceived by the teachings of the Materialists in this matter and fail to relate these common disturbances in society to a moral cause.

To begin with, the necessity for work has to be accepted by the Catholic as part of the doctrine of the Fall. Adam lost Eden, and one of the disabilities mankind inherited from him was the necessity to earn his bread 'by the sweat of his brow.' It is part of human atonement. To reject this, is to reject the necessity for suffering and penance too.

Now, the practising Catholic admits the idea of penance—largely in the form of prayers said privately in church after Confession, but has succumbed to the heresy that work is something if possible to be avoided rather than embraced. In the Ages of Faith, the public performance of penance was common: an Emperor walked

barefoot through the snow to apologise to a Pope; Henry II of England humbled himself publicly at the tomb of the martyred Archbishop of Canterbury. Then, people were ashamed of sin; now they are ashamed of penance, and, increasingly, of work, especially manual work.

For a good while after the Reformation, the spiritual value of work was upheld, often, unfortunately, by the people who had most to gain, materially, by this view. In England, for example, with the Enclosure movement, the invention of machinery and the new opportunities for profitable investment of capital, a new state of society was created, in which the independent craftsman almost disappeared and a new class of dependent wage-earners developed. It was obviously to the advantage of the employers to encourage the idea of the intrinsic value of work. The hard worker was patronised and exploited, while the Devil quoted Scripture for his own advantage.

Today, the pendulum has swung in the opposite direction. For various reasons, a good deal of power has passed into the hands of the formerly-exploited wage-earning class. Strikes occur with calamitous frequency among, however, those very men who cannot claim to be among the *lowest* paid bodies of workers in the community. The figures representing expenditure in Ireland for 1949 on tobacco, drink, amusements and gambling, have already been issued (£60,000,000 approximately), and have caused shocked comment in a number of newspaper and magazine articles. It has been said forthrightly, in some quarters, that attempts should be made to lower, not to raise (which is the constant demand) the standard of living, when so great a proportion of the national income can be spent on luxury. The pagan philosophy that comfort and self-indulgence are ends to be pursued has, however, gained too great a hold on the bulk of the population. The ends of justice are thought to be served by one section of the community black-mailing the rest, until its wages are raised and its spending power thus increased. Meanwhile, artificially-created conditions of famine are produced by the failure of workers to manufacture, or facilitate the distribution of goods.

The irresponsibility which has characterised many recent strikes is too, fundamentally, the rejection of the necessity for charity and the recognition of the interdependence of the members of the

community. The idea of 'service' has fallen into disrepute. It is confused with 'servitude' in spite of the nominal loyalty men may pay to the Successor of Peter who styles himself Servant of the Servants of God. In the visible world of work and service, men have lost sight of this interdependence because they have rejected the idea of the invisible bonds which bind them to one another, the bonds of universal, mutual charity which are implicit in the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ.

Then, for reasons which are to be found in a study of the results of the Industrial Revolution, much modern work is, of itself, uninteresting and unsatisfactory. In it, there is scope for neither personal responsibility nor craftsmanship. The Industrial Revolution turned workmen into machine-minders, denying them the opportunity to express their personality in creative activity. The state of society which turned man, made in God's image, into a 'hand', denied him his proper attributes, and is responsible for the spiritual atrophy that must follow if man, who is compound of mind and matter, becomes a mere automaton. 'The separation of matter and mind is man's death.' Death, spiritual death, has overtaken us.

Arising also from this misconception of the nature of man, there is, in our day, a very wrong attitude towards that part of work called 'manual labour.' Our educational system, which ostensibly, is guided by Christian ideals, acquiesces in this attitude. The boy who 'gets on', whose name figures on the Roll of Honour, is not the boy who opts to work with his hands. There is too, a distinction socially, between the man who handles a pick and the one who handles (however ineptly) the pen. Fundamentally, the man with the pick may be making a much greater and more indispensable contribution to the well-being of society. To imagine, that in performing certain types of (honest) work, men lose dignity, is thoroughly unorthodox. The balanced life of the cloister is the best guide in this matter, for there we see that mind and body are used sanely, as God intended them to be.

It is significant that the Saints have been distinguished by their readiness to perform the most menial tasks. Incidentally, the hint of another heresy rears its head in discussing this point with anyone tainted with materialism. Point out the balance achieved between the exercise of mind and body in a person of

distinguished holiness, and, so often, the answer is, 'But *he* was a saint.' Here is a confusion of cause and effect. We are not predestined, in the way Calvin taught, but have free will to choose between right and wrong living—just as the Saints had.

Bound up, of course, with this rejection of manual labour, is the natural (but, spiritually deleterious) desire for excessive physical comfort which characterises our age. Comfort and pleasure are, indeed, the avowed goal of living, and the creation of conditions, in which more and more leisure can be enjoyed, is the openly-professed aim of many governments. This is not surprising, because the time has come when, as St. Paul wrote to St. Timothy, 'they will not endure sound doctrine,' particularly in reference to the place of work in the Christian ethic. The Reformation and, subsequently, the increasingly secular outlook which has become modern agnosticism, has killed the spiritual aspect of work; by the Industrial Revolution, the workman was bereft of the natural satisfaction that a craftsman finds in his creation. Therefore, logically, work is an evil to be tolerated only for its wages, which can be used to purchase the means to make life pleasant. It is logical that the worker with this outlook should be content to do as little as possible for as much as he can possibly get. No 'machinery for arbitration' can deal effectively with this attitude of mind. The cause is a spiritual one, and only by spiritual means can the problem of irresponsible strikers, low production, absenteeism, and the consequent rise in prices, which so disastrously effects the poorest and most inarticulate sections of the community, be solved.

Ideals of reparation, of service and self-sacrificing charity, will have to be restored, generated by the knowledge and vivid realisation of Christian doctrine as it effects the very practical details of our personal, every-day lives. These are positive ideals, and, unfortunately, our theology, since the 14th and 15th centuries has become too juridical, too legalist. In considering the problems of morality, we give pre-eminence to the 'Shalt not' of the Old Testament, too often forgetting that, in addition, Our Lord most emphatically enjoined positive precepts of charity and self-abnegation. Saint Paul gave to the thief the negative command, 'let him steal no more' and then added, positively and very appositely for the subject under discussion, 'but work with his hands the thing which is good.'

Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament

Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P.

THEOLOGIANS are agreed that Our Blessed Lady used to assist and communicate at the daily Eucharistic sacrifice offered by St. John. They also teach that because of her fullness of grace and the perfection in which she possessed the theological virtues with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, her devotion at Mass grew evermore intense day by day. Consequently she is the perfect model of devotion to the Eucharist, *Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament.*

True enough, there is no explicit statement in Holy Scripture or the early documents of the church that Our Lady assisted at Mass or received Holy Communion. But there are many things contained implicitly in scripture and early tradition which only become clear with the passing of time and the development of theology; take for instance, the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption.

We know too, of course, that in the beginning the Canon of the Mass did not exist in its present form—the saints commemorated in it were only martyred later—but the essential elements of the sacrifice were there as they had been instituted by Our Lord on Holy Thursday when He said; 'Do this in commemoration of me' (Luke 22:9). St. John certainly celebrated the Eucharistic sacrifice. And it was to his care the Blessed Virgin was entrusted by Jesus before His death: 'Woman, behold they son . . behold thy mother' (John 19:25). We can be certain then that Our Lady was present and received communion at the Masses offered by St. John. Granting that, we have only to recall what theology has to say of the perfection of the infused virtues and gifts in Mary to form some idea of what her devotion to the Blessed Sacrament must have been.

M. Olier raises the question, why Our Lady was entrusted to the care of St. John rather than to that of the holy women who were also present on Calvary, and replies that it was because John was a priest and so possessed a unique treasure which he could share with Mary, the Eucharist. He then goes on to enquire why John

was chosen rather than, say Peter. The reason was, he answers, that John was the only one of the apostles to take his stand at the foot of the Cross, to which he was drawn by a gentle but powerful grace. Furthermore, M. Olier explains, following St. Augustine, John was the type of the contemplative life, of the interior and hidden life which had always been that of Mary and would be till the end. Mary's role was not like that of St. Peter, she was not called to take part in the external government of the Church, she was to be as it were the heart of the Church. Nobody would enter as she did into the intimacy and power of Christ's love but her influence was to remain hidden and mysterious like that of the heart in the physical body.

* * * *

What were the interior dispositions of Mary as St. John offered up the Holy Sacrifice before her? *The Blessed Virgin had not received the character of the priesthood* and could not exercise its functions, *but* says M. Olier, '*she had received the fullness of the priestly spirit*' which is that of Christ the Redeemer, and so she penetrated far more deeply than St. John into the mystery of the Altar. Besides, her dignity as Mother of God surpassed that of Christ's ministers, for it is a greater thing to give the Word his human nature than it is to give him his sacramental being, and it is a more perfect thing to be united with the Saviour in the offering of his Bloody immolation than it is to offer with him his sacramental immolation.

To Mary indeed, in a way we can never appreciate, the Eucharistic sacrifice was the memorial and substantial continuation of the sacrifice of the Cross. The suffering the Mother of God had endured on Calvary was so intense that its memory could never lose its vividness even if it were not recalled by the infused light of the Holy Spirit. And so there on the altar, as St. John celebrates, Mary finds the victim that was offered on the Cross, the same Jesus really present; it is not just an image or a symbol, *it is the substantial reality of the Body of the Saviour, together with his Blood, his Soul and Divinity.* True enough, there is no longer the bloody immolation, but there is the sacramental immolation, effected by the double consecration of the bread and the wine. The Blood of Jesus is sacramentally poured out on the altar. And this figure of

the death of Christ is supremely expressive for *her who cannot forget, in whose heart is engraved the image of her crucified Son.* This Eucharistic sacrifice celebrated before Mary by St. John is the most striking reproduction of that sacrifice of the Cross which is perpetuated in its substance by the sacramental immolation on the altar.

Furthermore, Mary saw better than any other how the Eucharistic sacrifice is the *meeting point of the earthly and the heavenly worship.* For it is the *same victim* who is offered on our altars and who in heaven presents his glorious wounds to the Father on our behalf. Again both in heaven and on earth *it is the same priest.* 'ever living to make intercession for us' (Hb. 8:25), since the earthly celebrant is only the minister of Christ, speaking in his name. 'This is my body': it is Jesus who speaks through him.

By her intense faith, enlightened as it was in a most eminent degree by the gifts of wisdom, knowledge and understanding, Mary grasped with singular penetration how Jesus as God gives to the words of consecration the power of changing the bread into his own Body and the wine into his precious Blood. She understood how the Son, as man, continues to offer himself for us, that he is the principal priest, and that if his minister is liable to be distracted by some detail of the ritual, Christ himself is never distracted but beholds all the vast radiation of his Eucharistic sacrifice on earth and in purgatory and all the glory it renders to God. Mary understood too far better than we can ever do on earth, that the soul of the Mass is the interior self-oblation that is ever alive in the heart of Christ, and that through this oblation he continues to apply to us the merits and the satisfaction of Calvary.

The Blessed Virgin *certainly united herself to this oblation of Jesus, the principal priest.* She united herself to it as universal mediatrix and co-redemptrix. She brought to it as to Calvary a spirit of adoration and reparation, of supplication and thanksgiving. She was thus *the perfect model of victim souls,* for she continued to offer up the intense suffering she endured at that denial of Jesus' Godhead which evoked the gospel of St. John in refutation. She gave thanks for the institution of the Eucharist and for all the benefits that came to us with it. Most certainly she prayed with insistence for the conversion of sinners, the progress of the good and the strengthening of the apostles in the labours and

sufferings which were to end in martyrdom.

In all this, Mary was our model, teaching us to become 'adorers in spirit and in truth.' In a surpassing degree she lived on the four ends of the sacrifice. There can be no question about it once we think over the fullness of the grace and the virtues that belonged to her.

* * * *

And what are we to say of Our Lady's communion in view of this same plenitude of grace and charity that was hers?

The principal condition of a fervent communion is *a hunger for the Eucharist*, just as with our ordinary food it is only when we approach it with appetite that it will really nourish us. The saints have this hunger for the Eucharist. Remember the communions of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Catherine of Siena. But no saint could compare with Our Blessed Lady in the intensity of her desire for the Eucharist: we cannot conceive the strength of the attraction that drew to Jesus the soul of his holy mother.

Every soul is drawn towards God, because he is the sovereign Good for which we are made. But as a result of original sin, together with our own personal sins and numerous imperfections, this desire for union with God is greatly enfeebled in us. Mary, however, has never known either original sin or actual sin; nor has the ardour of her charity ever been diminished by the least imperfection; no hesitation ever marred the promptness of her obedience to God's inspirations. As Pius IX says in the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, her charity while on earth surpassed that of all the saints together. And as her merits grew day by day so did the impetus of her soul towards God. The Holy Spirit moved her infallibly to give herself freely to God and to receive him. This love and ardent thirst induced a spiritual suffering that ended only with her death of love and the eternal union. Such was the longing for the Eucharist in the Blessed Virgin, for the degree of her charity was far superior even to the transforming union described by St. Teresa in her Seventh Mansion; she was above ecstasy, to use the expression of St. Gertrude.

On his part, Jesus was filled with the desire to see the sanctification of Mary reach its full term. He longed only to share

with her in ever greater abundance the treasures of grace with which his own Heart overflowed; and in Mary he found no impediment. The result was as perfect a fusion of their two souls as is possible here below.

At the moment of communion, Mary became again the living and spotless tabernacle of Our Lord, a tabernacle of knowledge and love, infinitely more precious than a ciborium of gold.

* * * *

What were the effects of Mary's communion, considering what theologians teach about the effects of a very fervent communion? Let us repeat that they immensely surpassed the transforming union described for us by St. Teresa in her Seventh Mansion. This union which, in a manner transforms the soul into God by knowledge and love, has been compared to the union between a bar of iron and the fire into which it is plunged or again to that between the air and the light which penetrates it. So in Mary the ray of supernatural light and love that issued from the soul of Jesus more and more illuminated her intelligence and inflamed her will. By her prayer, the humble virgin turned these gifts into worship of God and graces for us. Like a prism she received these spiritual rays only to pass them on to us.

Can we affirm with certitude that each of Mary's communions was much more fervent and fruitful than the preceding one? There can be no doubt about it, for each communion should increase our degree of charity and so normally dispose us to make on the following day a communion which spiritually if not sensibly will be more fervent. St. Thomas says: 'As a stone falls so much the more rapidly as it approaches the earth which attracts it, so ought souls to advance the more rapidly towards God as they approach nearer to him and are more drawn by him.' This law of life and grace was fully realised in Mary because in her it met with no obstacle. Most certainly the soul of the Blessed Virgin gave itself more generously and more promptly the nearer she drew to him and the more she was drawn by him. Here was a marvellous acceleration of which physical gravitation gives us only a feeble example.

And so Mary is the *perfect model of devotion to the Eucharist.* If we turn to her humbly she will teach us without sound of words what is meant by the *spirit of adoration and reparation*, this is the spirit of sacrifice through the generous acceptance of our daily trials. She longs to show us practically what *desire we should bring to the Holy Eucharist*, what fervour should mark our *supplications* for the great intentions of the Church and what *gratitude* we should express for so many benefits. She can teach us to live most intimately on the four ends of the sacrifice of the Mass.

This is what we find constantly repeated by St. Louis Mary Grignion de Montfort in his admirable Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin and also by B. Julian Eymard in those so fervent and practical meditations of his on the Four ends of Sacrifice. The writings of these two great servants of God, composed in a great spirit of faith under the illumination of the Holy Spirit, are in clear accord with the surest principles of theology. Enlightened by theology they in their turn make theology more practical, and more concrete, more living and radiant.

Prayer, like good generalship, must sometimes be daring. To ask a king for a trifle is to insult him. The thief daringly asked Jesus to give him the kingdom of heaven—to give it in a moment—to give it after a life of sin. And it was given to him even as he prayed.

Prayer moves an arm that is almighty, and that arm moves the world.—Fr. Vincent McNabb, O.P.

Thanksgiving with Mary

R. J. Roche, O.P.

POPE PIUS X. in his Encyclical on Frequent Communion says that Communion should be followed by 'suitable thanksgiving.' The holy Pope does not tell us how long our Thanksgiving should last, nor does he suggest a method of making it. The faithful are aware that no time is too long for Thanksgiving, but that at least a quarter of an hour should be spent in conversation with Our Lord. If occasionally, owing to circumstances, we are obliged to shorten it, we apologise to Our Lord and we try to 'make up' by some special exercise during the day. Always, on Communion days, (it is hoped that we receive daily), we try to bear in mind that 'we have been to Communion,' our souls and bodies have been sanctified by the touch of Christ: we are careful not to utter a harsh word, nor one of criticism, to be guilty of even a slight negligence or a wilful distraction. We should connect our Communion with our Confession, and in making our Thanksgiving we should earnestly beg for grace to avoid the faults we have confessed. The amendment of our lives is the surest proof that we have made a good Communion and a good Thanksgiving.

Communion should be an incentive to the love of God and of our neighbour, and a brake upon our passions; it should restrain us in temptation; it should transform our fallen nature and make us Christ-like. During the day of Communion we should keep a watch upon ourselves, for that 'may be quickly lost through negligence, which was hardly gotten by grace.' (Imitation, B.I. 22).

As to how our Thanksgiving should be made, what method we should follow, much will depend on individual preference: no hard and fast rule can be laid down, but we shall offer a few suggestions in the course of this article. If we try earnestly to make a good Thanksgiving, Our Lord will give us the grace to abandon our weaknesses, to keep our resolutions, and to understand his ways. If we are in any way negligent or indifferent about our Thanksgiving we shall miss many of the graces of Holy Communion

Fifty years ago Frequent Communion was not very common:

most people were content with receiving the Blessed Sacrament monthly. Every communion was an event, an occasion to be carefully prepared for and to be followed by a fairly lengthy Thanksgiving. No one dreamed of leaving the Church immediately after Mass, but spent a quarter-of-an-hour in reading his prayer-book, praying for the Pope's intentions, for his friends, relatives and even his enemies, and for himself. Sometimes on Sodality mornings the priest read from the pulpit a formula of Thanskgiving to help those who had no prayer-books and who might waste the precious time in distractions. Nowadays, when many persons communicate frequently, it is to be feared that the importance of Thanksgiving is overlooked, and that people hurry out of the Church too soon. And yet these moments are the most precious in our lives, when Christ within us pours forth his choicest graces. We should use every available moment, for we have a hard way before us.

In Union with Mary

There is no better way of making our Thanksgiving than in union with Mary. To render thanks adequately is beyond our power: we have not and never shall have sufficient holiness: Our Lord is a gift too great for our puny hearts and our stammering tongues. Mary alone realizes what a wondrous treasure the Holy Communion is, and she will gladly make our Thanksgiving. That great servant of God, St. Louis Mary de Montfort, advises us, when we receive Our Lord, to place him in Mary's arms and let her adore him and love him for us! And our adoration and love will be acceptable to him when they are united with Mary's. What a beautiful solution of the difficulty, and oh! how simple and easy it is.

Let us take the Saint's advice. When we receive Our Lord, let us give him to Mary, and say to her: 'Mother Mary, here is your Son Who died for me. I am unworthy and unable to speak to him as I ought, so I leave him to you.' And Mary will take him lovingly and adoringly, as she did in his Infancy and in her own perfect Communions. She will do more: she will tell him of the poor, timid, humble soul who feels its own unworthiness to address him, and has relied on her. Our Lord will be touched

by our humility, and by the compliment we pay to the kindness of his Mother.

And whilst Mary adores and loves him we shall be, as it were, in a corner looking on, and offering our own poor prayers. We shall think of how little we have loved him: of our frequent relapses, of our distractions, of our criticisms, and above all, we shall think of how kind and forgiving he has been to us. And now and then, we shall pull gently at Mary's garment and ask her to put in a word for us, to tell him again of our sorrow for not keeping our resolutions, and ask her to obtain for us the grace to be faithful —this time!

We give her our hearts that she may offer them to him—our poor sorry hearts. Our hearts will be made ready by Mary, they will be purged from dross, they will be offered as hers. Why does Christ seek our hearts? That he may love the Father with them! He wishes to love the Father with the hearts of all the world united with his own Sacred Heart. This is what we mean when we say at Communion: 'Lord Jesus, I give you my heart.' We give our hearts to him through Mary, purified. They are in themselves a poor gift indeed, but coming through Mary they will be acceptable.

Love of Men

As we have given our hearts to Christ, we must share his love for men, His zeal for their salvation. The Eucharist is the great Sacrament of Charity, uniting all men in God's love. As St. Paul says: 'We are all one person in Christ Jesus.' (1. Cor. 10::17) Whilst we hate and deplore sin, we must love the sinner: not even the reddest communist is outside the pale of our charity. Truly Eucharistic souls have great zeal, because their hearts are given through Mary to Christ, the zealous Lover of souls. The misfortunes, especially the spiritual misfortunes, of others are their concern: missionaries go to far countries or labour at home for the good of souls: nuns and brothers give up all they hold dear to devote themselves to the interest of souls, because 'the charity of Christ urges them.' (2. Cor. 5:14).

Here our dear and Most Blessed Mother helps us. As we kneel in our corner whilst she adores and loves Jesus for us, we ask her to purify and widen our hearts that they may be big enough for

all the world. We cannot go to foreign countries, but we can love the people in them, we can pray for them, we can offer up our own little crosses for them. Every time we restrain impatience, or subdue an inclination to murmur or to criticize, we are doing something for those unfortunate people who are as sheep without a shepherd. 'The enemy has struck the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock are dispersed.' (Matt. 26:31). There are many parishes without priests, what priests there are may not preach, the people are deprived of the Sacraments and of the word of God, the schools are closed, little children are growing up in ignorance. Is not this worth thinking about, is it not enough to wring our hearts? Should we not be concerned about the plight of these unfortunate souls whom Our Lord loves so much, and even about their misguided persecutors? Well may we ask Our Lady to purify and cleanse our hearts that they may be united with the Heart of Jesus in his love for souls.

The Victim Spirit

Christ's love of the Father was a practical self-denying love. In order to redeem souls he stopped at nothing, he was obedient even unto death. Our love must be similar: when we offer our hearts to God at Holy Communion, we must have Christ's disposition as a Victim, and the Blessed Virgin will help us towards it.

Christ is a Victim on Calvary and at Mass: He comes to us in his state of Victim in Holy Communion, and seeks to fill us with the victim spirit. There has been only one communicant in history who perfectly understood and corresponded with this wish of Christ, namely the Blessed Virgin, and we, her children, must be taught by her. Her lesson is that we should share his Cross by carrying our own crosses in his spirit. Hence we must be resigned to God's will, no matter what he may send us.

Seldom are we asked for high heroic sacrifices: these are for great saints. Ours are only ordinary, commonplace little things, the aches and pains, the disappointments and contradictions of everyday life. It is easy to offer them in a general way, but not so easy when it comes to practice: when the cross is presented to us, we are apt to refuse it or to try to escape it: we do not see that it is *this* very pain or *this* disappointment that is our cross. We should

therefore, in our Thanksgiving strive to get down to details, with the help of Mary our Mother, and if some one thing or some one person particularly upsets us we shall accept the annoyance and unite it with the Cross of Christ.

This does not mean that we may not pray to be freed from our crosses, or to have them lightened, especially from ill-health or great poverty. Our Lord in the Garden prayed to be delivered from his own awful sufferings, but, like him, we pray with resignation, saying: 'Not my will, but Thine be done.'

Our crosses, be it noted well, have a redemptive value. Our Lord redeemed the world by suffering. We become redeemers with him. By adding our own comparatively trifling crosses to his heavy one, we obtain a share in the work of redemption; by the kindness of of Christ we are allowed to pay something of the price of our own sins and the sins of the world. This may help us to understand the spirit of the saints and the extraordinary mortifications they underwent in order to make reparation for sinners.

Such is a summary of a truly spiritual method of Thanksgiving after Communion. Once grasped it should be easy to practise, and should be sufficient for at least a quarter-of-an-hour.

PRAYER . . . .

Believe me, my dear friends—believe an experience ripened by thirty years in the sacred ministry—I do affirm that all deceptions, all spiritual deficiencies, all miseries, all falls, all faults, and even the most serious wanderings out of the right path, all proceed from a single source—a want of constancy in prayer. Live the life of prayer, learn to bring everything, to change everything into prayer—pains and trials and temptations of every kind.

Pray *in the calm;* **Pray** *in the storm;* **Pray** *on awakening and* **Pray** *during the daytime; going and coming,* **Pray;** *tired and distracted,* **Pray;** *whatsoever may be your repugnance,* **Pray; Pray** *that you may learn to pray.* '*Lord teach us to pray,*' (*Luke II:I*).—*Father de Ravignan.*

The Mass of the Precious Blood

S. E. Cullen, O.P.

THE PROMISE, the reality, the results, of the life and death of Jesus Christ are the unifying theme of our year's liturgical worship of God. The Word made Flesh is the divine and human instrument chosen by the Father to bring about our grace-union with Him. At Christmas we adore the Word become Man in the crib. During Passiontide we adore Him on the cross. Epiphany, Easter, Pentecost, three ancient and towering feasts, show forth the splendour and majesty of His divine origin—and we are filled with a spirit of awe and reverence. Then, having bowed in lowly creature homage before the strong brightness of the Trinity itself, the Church invites us to keep the rest of the year in the human company of our Lord. Corpus Christi expresses His fraternal longing to be with us. In June we are called to a special worship of the Sacred Heart, the symbol of His divine and human love for us. July is set aside for the special devotion of the Most Precious Blood. The Mass of the feast is a beautiful one and packed with rich thoughts urging us to pray it better.

Introit and Collect

The *Introit* announces grandly: *Thou hast redeemed us, O Lord, in thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation and hast made us to our God a kingdom.* (Apoc. 5). In the *Collect* God is asked that the power of the blood of Christ, so pleasing to Him, preserve us from sin on earth and win us a place with Christ in the kingdom presented to the Father. *Almighty and eternal God, who didst ordain thine only begotten Son to be the Redeemer of the world, and didst will to be appeased by His blood; grant we beseech Thee, that we may so honour by our solemn service this the price of our redemption, and by its virtue be so defended from the evils of our present life on earth, that we may enjoy its fruit in heaven for evermore.* Sure of being heard, we can echo and re-echo the words, *Here is a song to put the Lord's mercies on record forever;*

ages will pass, and still these words of mine shall proclaim thy faithfulness (K.-Ps. 88, second part of Introit).

The blood of Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, which flowed down the wood of the cross is the price of our redemption from the double death of sin and everlasting estrangement from God. We should try to grasp and bring home to ourselves the meaning of this astounding fact. He received his first living blood from the Virgin-Mother. Then she delivered him and placed him in the manger of the stable-cave at Bethlehem. Eight days later the Jewish baby was circumcised, his sacred flesh was cut and blood flowed in drops—that was the first of many sheddings. He complied with this ritual (in accordance with the covenant God made with Abraham) to show us the reality of his human flesh and origin; it is an example of the life-long loving obedience of his human will to God's will. During this ceremony he was given officially the name Jesus, which means Saviour, Redeemer, Liberator. He was true to that powerful name.

'The Son of Man is not come to be ministered unto,' he declared, 'but to minister and to give his life a redemption for many.' Before and during our Lord's time, the word 'redemption' was used to signify the sum of money with which a man condemned to death bought back, as it were, his life. Christ applies this meaning of the word to himself. He is come to buy back, to redeem, the human race from the twofold death of sin and damnation. His death is for our life.

God in the beginning did create the whole universe very good. Concord reigned in heaven when the angels were first brought into being, their splendid orders were in the most felicitous harmony and beautiful to contemplate. Man too was created part spirit to share in the good things of God. Then it was that a flaw or a rent happened in one point of this delicate and exquisite web—and it extended and unravelled and destroyed the web. This evil was sin.

Sin is an infinite offence to God. It is lifting up an arm to strike against the Supreme Benefactor; against the Almighty Creator in whom all majesty and glory and beauty and sanctity centre. All-wise perfection and All-merciful justice react against this stealing of divine rights over creation. For man's infidelity and ingratitude he has been thrust back into his nothingness and dust, and lost God, the Life of all living.

Epistle and Gradual

The epistle of this feast is the strong assertion of St. Paul to the Hebrews (9): Christ has approached God on our behalf, his blood has cleansed us from our iniquity, he has linked us in friendship with God again, our service of the living God now is acceptable. *Brethren, but Christ, having appeared as High Priest of the good things which are come, hath entered into the sanctuary once for all through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made by hands, that is, not belonging to this creation, nor again in virtue of the blood of goats and calves, but of his own blood, having thus secured everlasting redemption* (Westminster Version).

God from all eternity had foreseen the Fall. In His eternal mercy He had willed that the damage be repaired. He had willed along with the creation of the First Adam, who would bring about evil, to create a Second Adam, who would make all things anew. God the Son made Flesh would make expiation and atonement to the Godhead. He would be the renovator of the broken web. This was a decision of divine bounty and infinite pity, a resolution of infinite justice too. It was a grand way of showing forth boundless merciful kindness and strict justice. God does not, cannot, deny Himself a total glory. He could have condoned the debt or accepted the partial payment that broken man could make, taking the will for the deed. But it was far more becoming, far more worthy of the munificence and wisdom of God that in the sight of angels and men full atonement should be made, and the eternal decree realised of making man a sharer in divine beatitude.

In order that perfect justice may be satisfied three conditions are required. Firstly, restoration must be adequate, that is, for as much as has been taken away from the offended person, an equal compensation must be rendered by the offending person. The second condition is that the reparation be made by the offending party, or by another who lawfully takes his place. The third is that he who pays the debt has a right to be received by the offended party. These three conditions have been kept in the Redemption by our Blessed Lord. The debt of honour and homage due to the Divinity has been amply paid, and by one who had a right to do so, and who was most acceptable to God. Christ was able to render infinite honour and homage to divine majesty because he was God made Man, whose every action was of infinite moral

value. He had a strict right to take our place, because he is one of us, not an outsider, our brother in the flesh; but he was sinless and guiltless. He was most acceptable to God: 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'

The *Gradual* refers to the baptism of Christ and to the redeeming blood, *This is he that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ: not by water only, but by water and blood* (1, Jn., 5). This association of 'water' and 'blood' by St. John is instructive for us. The effects of the redeeming blood of Christ first reach us through the sacrament of Baptism, which is the start of our Christian life and the 'gateway' leading to the other sacraments and to the fullness of the riches of this blood in the Blessed Eucharist.

Gospel and Preface

The gospel is from St. John, ch. 19, *When Jesus had taken the vinegar, he said: It is consummated. And bowing his head he gave up the ghost. . . .The soldiers therefore, came, and they broke the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with him. But after they were come to Jesus, when they saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers with a spear opened his side, and immediately there came out blood and water.* Jesus had drunk the bitter chalice of redemption even to the last drop. 'It is consummated,' the work given him is finished, the Father's business is done. 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,' with his last words he freely surrenders his human soul. Holy and contemplative minds delight to consider the blood that flowed from the pierced side as a symbol of redemption, the water a symbol of baptism, which is grace-giving because of the blood with which it mingles. They pray they may enter through that wound into the very heart of Christ. The Fathers of the Church have seen in that wound, the Church coming forth.

We do not adore the precious blood in so far as it is so many chemicals; it is adorable because it is the peerless blood of the God-Man. In that blood is the Redemption. It is the life-giving purchase-money. The warm blood on the cross is the sign and proof of His death, and the guarantee and source of life for us, it is what quickens our Sacraments and blesses the Church.

The preface is that of Passiontide, '. . . *God, who didst set the salvation of mankind upon the tree of the cross, so that whence came*

death, thence also life might arise again, and he that overcame by the tree, on the tree also might be overcome: per Christum Dominum nostrum. . . . Again we are told the purpose of Christ's coming: to undo the damage caused by sin, to make amends for the affront given to God. The Old Covenant foreshadowed the New, it was the promise and the preparation for the new era of Christ's rule by grace and love. As Moses sprinkled the book with blood as a seal and confirmation of the Old Covenant, so Christ's red blood is the ink that signs the new parchment of the cross. At last Divine Justice is appeased and Divine Wrath is placated, full measure and flowing over: God and Man are linked in eternal friendship.

Conclusion

This Mass, and every Mass, is Calvary again, morning after morning. *The chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?* (Offertory, 1 Cor. 10). As the precious blood spouted from His bleeding frame on that First Good Friday, He could repeat the words of the previous night at the close of His Last Supper and Gift to us, 'Father, the hour is come. Glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee . . . I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And glorify thou me, O Father, with thyself, with the glory I had, before the world was, with thee.' (Jn. 17: 4, 5)

Our Mass of the Precious Blood, ends with prayers of hope that we too, will join Him in that glory. Listen to the splendid and triumphant note of the *Communion* and *Postcommunion*.

> 'And as it is appointed to all men once to die, and thereafter cometh judgement, *so also will Christ, offered once "to bear the sins of many," appear a second time with no part in sin unto salvation for those who wait for him,*' (Heb. 9, W.).
>
> *Admitted to the holy table, O Lord, we have drawn water in joy from the fountains of the Saviour: may his blood, we beseech thee, become within us a fountain of water springing up to eternal life.*

SCANNED

Praying with the Church

Hilda C. Graef

From the Month of Mary to the Feast of the Seven Dolours

PERHAPS THE best way of preparing both for the Coming of the Holy Ghost, and for the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity is to do so in the company of Mary, as the Apostles did in the Cenacle. This is especially easy as Pentecost and Trinity Sunday are celebrated either during or immediately after May, the month of Mary. For it may be that despite all our efforts we cannot find the right approach to these mysteries—well, then Mary, the Bride of the Spirit, will surely find a way for us. Some people, especially, of course, those brought up in Protestantism, but also others, notably the more 'highbrow' Catholics, are almost afraid to give Our Lady any but the very lowest place in their life of prayer, as if, what is given to her, were taken away from God and Our Lord. If we do that we need not be surprised if our spiritual life goes wrong and we cannot find the right way to pray. A Protestant young woman once asked was it not wrong, if one had little time to give to prayer anyway, to 'waste', so to speak, so much time on praying to Our Lady if one could pray directly to God.

Now the answer to this is that, first of all, of course, no prayer to Our Lady is 'wasted time', because it is prayer through her to God. She occupies her exalted place in heaven and in the Church of God for no other reason but precisely because she is the Virgin Mother of God, because she is most intimately linked up with the Divinity through the fact that the Eternal Word took flesh from her. All her privileges, from her Immaculate Conception to her bodily Assumption into Heaven, derive from this. Therefore, if we pray to her, we are at once put in touch with Our Lord—as when she came to visit Elizabeth, St. John, in his mother's womb, immediately rejoiced in his presence.

But it is not only the time we give to praying to Our Lady. In fact comparatively little depends on that. Devotion to Our Lady is a kind of spiritual consciousness, as a child is conscious of the

love of his mother even without actually talking to her or consciously thinking of her. One knows she is there, always ready to help her children, one turns to her in need, comes and shows one's love to her, saying the *Angelus* or the *Salve Regina*. And through this devotion to our Mother, our life of prayer is somehow made more simple, more tender, difficulties are smoothed out more easily. With some people it is almost a kind of pride that will not allow our Lady entrance into their life of prayer. 'She is only a creature, after all, and prayer is direct relationship with God.' But, as we have seen before, relationship with God means relationship with Jesus, and if we accept Jesus we have to accept his Mother, too. If we invite her into our life of prayer together with her Son, it will not be to our detriment; when we find ourselves poor, with all the wine of our fine thoughts and considerations spent, it will be she who will ask her Son, as she once did at Cana, to change the water of our aridity into the wine of contemplation.

In the month of Mary, then, as we are preparing for the Coming of the Spirit, let us make a large place in our spiritual life for Mary. for it is through her, as St. Grignion de Montfort teaches, that by the action of the Holy Ghost, Jesus will be formed in us, which is the goal of all prayer.

For on the month of Mary, there follows June, which is dedicated in a special way to Our Lord. The great liturgical cycle which began with the First Sunday of Advent closed with Trinity Sunday, which marks the end of Paschal Tide. In the second half of her Year the Church is no longer concerned to follow closely the events of Our Lord's Life, but goes out into her vast inheritance, choosing among the mysteries those she desires to place before the faithful in a special way. It is only fitting that the first great feast after Trinity Sunday should be Corpus Christi.

How could one speak about prayer without mentioning the Blessed Sacrament, the food of our spiritual life, which causes our love to blossom forth into perfect charity and our prayer to develop into union with God? Our Lord, whose delight it is to be with the children of men, instituted the Eucharist on Maundy Thursday so that he might remain with us in the most intimate union possible, that is as our very food. Corpus Christi is the feast of thanksgiving for this most wonderful gift, and surely it is no mere coincidence that the greatest theologian of the Church,

St. Thomas Aquinas, should have been chosen to compose the office for this feast. There are few poems of the Church in which perfect theological accuracy and tender depth of devotion have been so perfectly blended as in the *Pange Lingua* and *Verbum supernum*, his hymns for Vespers and Lauds of Corpus Christi, and the Sequence *Lauda Sion*. In the Blessed Sacrament Our Lord is so near to us and his love is so overwhelming that devotion may sometimes become over-emotional; the idea of the 'Prisoner in the Tabernacle', for example, and certain expressions, found even in approved spiritual writers, as if Our Lord could still suffer in His Eucharistic Body, at least from our ingratitude, tend to nourish a not altogether wholesome piety. Our Lord is as impassible in his Sacrament as he is in his glorified Body in Heaven—else how could he be our Food? For the primary reason why he gave us the Eucharist is to be our Food, not an object of our worship, '*Cibum turbae doudenae se dat suis manibus*' (By his own hands he gives himself as Food to the Twelve), sings St. Thomas, and again in the Lauds hymn: *Quibus sub bina specie Carnem dedit et sanguinem. Ut duplicis substantiae Totum cibaret hominem.*' (To whom he gave His flesh and blood in twofold species that he might nourish the whole man of twofold substance). Let us then rejoice on this glorious Feast in Our Lord, exposed in the monstrance, but even more in his Sacramental Presence within us, so that we, too, may become a monstrance, as it were, showing Him forth to others. Without devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and as frequent Communion as we can arrange to have, our spiritual life will remain cold and barren; the Eucharist is the very heart of our spiritual life, because it is a real union—though often unfelt—with his Humanity and Divinity.

After Corpus Christi has been celebrated with its Octave, our prayer will turn in gratitude to the love of Jesus which has given us this Sacrament. For the Feast of the Sacred Heart is nothing else but the feast of his love represented under the sign of the Heart, the seat of love. There are some people who find devotion to the Sacred Heart difficult—as if in It we were just worshipping a part of Our Lord's Body. Now, first of all, as the Humanity of Jesus is hypostatically united to his Divinity, there is no part of his Body which we may not worship. Indeed, if we really believe him God and Man, we shall have the ardent desire to worship

also his Body, which He turned into the instrument of our salvation by allowing his Hands and Feet and Side to be pierced. It was the loving meditation on the Wounds of Our Lord, so wide-spread in the Middle Ages, that led to the discovery, so to speak, of his Heart. For whoever meditated devoutly on the Wound in his Side, could hardly fail to arrive at the Heart that was pierced when this Wound was made. This meditation combined with the Gospel narrative of the Beloved Disciple resting his head on the Breast of Jesus at the Last Supper, led to the rise of devotion to the Sacred Heart. It is true that most of the Sacred Heart statues and pictures are atrocious—but what has that to do with the Divine Love streaming from this Heart? How can we fail to see that, in showing us His Heart, Our Lord is inviting us to pray to him with absolute confidence, to cast all our sorrows, all our difficulties on him? 'Come to me, all you that labour and are burdened: and I will refresh you.' The more simply we approach him through his Love for us, the more surely shall we attain to that spiritual relationship with him which is the content of all Christian prayer. For we have a right to this relationship; not, of course, through our own merits which are nothing, and are of value only because of our union with him—but we have a right to it because we are redeemed by his Blood.

After the Feast of the Sacred Heart, the Church leads us on to the Feast of the Precious Blood, to which the whole month of July is dedicated. During this time we may well read a little of St. Catherine of Siena, who might almost be called the Saint of the Precious Blood, so intense was her devotion to It. The Church seems to delight in developing all the themes of Passion Tide in greater detail later in the year: we have had the Institution of the Eucharist and the pierced Heart in June, now she invites us to give our thoughts to the Precious Blood. How could we not follow her gladly and in the warm summer days fill our prayer with the warmth of the love of the Son of God that led him to shed his Blood for us to the last drop? Though we are living in a sinful, apostate world; yet we are also living in a redeemed world; when the warm Blood ran down on Golgotha—as the old legend has it, flowing down on the skull of Adam which was buried there, and thus redeeming Him and his race—the cold reign of paganism that left man without hope in the world was ended, and the new life of grace sprang up

all over the Roman Empire and beyond. The Precious Blood had flown—now the blood of its martyrs would also begin to flow, to be the fertile seed of the Church.

And with the voice of the martyrs confessing Christ mingles the voice of the Queen of Martyrs, singing her Magnificat as Elizabeth tells her that she is blessed among women. For our Lady is never far from her Son, and if, perhaps, the Feast of the Precious Blood has thrown us back too violently into the atmosphere of Passion Tide the lovely Feast of the Visitation is there to console us and to fill us with a happiness which takes its colour from the delight of Elizabeth when Mary came to her bearing the Son of God. After it the Church gives us a veritable galaxy of our Lady's feasts, Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Our Lady of the Snow, then, of course, her greatest feast, her Assumption into Heaven, and, not too long after, her Nativity and her Seven Sorrows. How can we fail to forget our heavenly Mother when we are perpetually reminded of her by our earthly Mother, the Church? The Queen of Contemplatives, the Queen of Heaven, the Mother of Sorrows —all her mysteries are set before us, to make us ever more loving and confident and entrust to her the prayer we offer to God and her Son.

(Miss Graef's articles on Prayer will be embodied in her book, *The Spiritual Life for the Laity*, to be published by Mercier Press.)

'I CANNOT PRAY.'

This is heresy. Yes, you can always pray. If you feel a disgust, nay, a horror of prayer, pray on; pray in spite of yourself, against yourself. Beg for the courage in prayer which our agonising Saviour merited for you by His pangs in Gethsemane and upon Calvary. **Pray:** *for prayer is the strength which saves: the courage which preserves: the mystic bridge cast over the abyss, which joins the soul to God. 'And being in an agony, He prayed the longer,' (Luke 22:43).*
—Father de Ravignan.

Blessed Pius X

Henry Gaffney, O.P.

A QUARTER OF A century ago, I knelt with the groups that gathered around the tomb of Pope Pius X, in the crypt of Saint Peter's basilica. They are there this morning too, and after all the years they seem the same, a cross-section of Catholic life, old and young, lay and cleric, Roman citizens and pilgrims from far lands, all kneeling around the resting place of a dead Pope. This morning the clerics predominate, many of them priests, preparing for or in thanksgiving after Mass, and many of them students on the verge of Ordination. Kneeling there in the stillness of the crypt they seem to be listening rather than consciously praying. So well they might. For them that tomb is not silent. The pontifical voice of the tenth Pius is still speaking as their forebears heard it long ago:

'*We priests, Christ's representatives, must bear Him in ourselves, and, as His ambassadors, where He wills there must we be. Since the sure and only sign of true friendship is to will and not to will the same thing; as His friends we must let that mind be in us which was in Christ Jesus, holy, innocent and undefiled. As His ambassadors, then, we must win men to belief in His law and teaching by observing them ourselves, for it behoves us, who, as sharing His power, lift up men from the bondage of sin, to strive with all possible care not to be ourselves ensnared.*

'*But we are more especially bound to this union of mind with Him when acting as His ministers in the most august Sacrifice in which He Who offered Himself to God, an unspotted Victim on the Altar of the Cross, offers Himself anew, with unfailing power, for the life of the world. If in former times—days of types and figures—such great holiness was expected in priests, what of us now that the Victim is Christ? Must not the partaker of such a sacrifice excel everything in purity? More lustrous than the solar ray should the hand be that divides this flesh, the mouth that is filled with spiritual fire, the tongue that is reddened with this most adorable blood.*' [1]

[1] The quotation is from Saint John Chrysostom's Homily (82) on Matthew.

Yes, that voice still is raised not alone in exhortation but in grave counsel :—

'Since sanctity of life, as everyone knows, is the fruit of the will helped by Divine grace, God has provided abundantly for us that grace may never be wanting to anyone who desires it. It is chiefly obtained by assiduity in prayer, and there is this inevitable connection between prayer and holiness that the latter cannot exist without the former. This is a truth which St. Chrysostom wholly endorses, saying: "I consider it evident to all that it is simply impossible to continue in virtue without the protection of prayer"; and St. Augustine says pointedly: "He in truth knows how to live rightly, who knows how to pray rightly" (Hom. IV. ex 50). Christ Himself persuades us of the fact by His frequent exhortations and still more by His own example. He was wont to retire to the desert to pray, or to go alone into the mountains, and even to spend whole nights in prayer. He frequently went to the Temple, and often, when surrounded by the multitudes, He prayed publicly with eyes raised to Heaven. Lastly upon the Cross, in the pangs of death, He besought His Father with a strong cry and tears.

'Let us hold it as a fundamental truth, that if a priest wishes to live up to the standard required by his position and his calling, he must give himself with intense earnestness to prayer.'

These words come from the Encyclical which Pope Pius addressed to the priests of the world on the golden jubilee of his own priestly ordination. We are told by Cardinal Merry Del Val, his Secretary of State, that the long letter was a labour of love written in his scanty leisure by the Pontiff.[1] Cardinal Bourne describes it as the outpouring of the heart of a true priest fashioned to the likeness of his Master, as priest and bishop and supreme Pontiff.[2] What wonder that its echoes are heard here around the quiet tomb of Pius !

Around this holy place many memories cluster. Who will forget that within that cold marble is the hand which when it held the Petrine Keys used them to open the Tabernacle doors to the little ones whom Jesus loved? Perhaps, this is the most vivid memory of Pope Pius in the hearts of the faithful who then were children and who today, are gathering to rejoice in his beatification, many of them, no doubt, feeling that this glory of Pius is belated and almost tardy. Forty years ago he died with a reputation for sanctity,

[1] Memories of Pope Pius X. Burns, Oates. 1939.
[2] Introduction to letter to Catholic Priests. Burns, Oates. 1944.

and it seemed that his beatification would have soon followed. Those who so thought, forgot that the scrutiny of his life of eighty years would be long as well as searching. That examination would go back to the years of his boyhood, the hard boyhood of the son of a poor man, to his years as a young priest in Tambola, to his pastorate in Salzano, to his episcopate in Mantua, to his patriarchate in Venice and, finally, to his pontificate of the universal Church. Those who were impatient for the glory of Pius can now rejoice the more keenly in the realisation that his cause has come triumphant through such exacting tests. Throughout his whole life shone that serene sanctity which was acclaimed even while the solemn bell of Saint Peter's pealed *pro Pontifice agonizante* in the dark August of 1914.

Pius had always loved the quiet things and solitude. His successive dignities left his humility and his simplicity unsullied:

. . . I have asked to be
Where storms not come,
Where the green swell is in the havens dumb,
And out of the swing of the sea . . . [1]

But he was ready when God called him to hold the helm of Peter's boat in the first storms of the new Lepanto.

There are many who would praise Pope Pius for his immense labours which achieved so much for the glory of God, the high courage with which he maintained against the Modernists the integrity of the Faith, the zeal with which he re-established sacred music in its pristine glory, or the wisdom with which he initiated the codification of the multitudinous laws promulgated during the long history of the Church.

Of this last 'momentous enterprise', let his successor speak. 'Divine Providence had ordained,' said Pope Benedict, 'that the glory of rendering this colossal service to the Church should fall to Our Predecessor of saintly memory . . . he set himself to this truly gigantic task with zeal and perseverance . . . and, therefore, his name will be handed down to posterity by the side of those Pontiffs of greatest fame in the story of Canon Law.'

Behind all these achievements, so ruthlessly abbreviated in the telling, one might envision a world at peace. But no. In many nations the Church was being persecuted and her liberty trammelled. Bitter persecution burst out in Portugal, ending in

[1] Gerald Manley Hopkins.

the exile of all her bishops. Hostilities were rife in Germany. The Russian skies were already an angry red, presage of the growing storm. France, the Eldest Daughter of the Church, had broken its Concordat and turned so bitterly hostile that open persecution was threatened. The Pope replied by consecrating twelve French Bishops in Saint Peter's. His farewell to them epitomises his own august heroism amid the universal tumult: 'Here I conclude,' said the Pontiff, 'with the assurance that I envy you your lot, that I would fain come with you to share your sorrows and anxieties, to be ever at your side to comfort you. But, I shall be always with you in spirit, and we shall meet each day in the divine sacrifice of the Mass, before that holy Tabernacle whence we derive strength in battle and the sure means of victory.'

There we come close to that which has brought Pope Pius to beatification. All his labours, all his achievements, would count for little in his cause, if there is not found in them the heroism of virtue. On this count we have the evidence of witnesses who speak with authority. 'Pius was above all,' said Cardinal Hayes, 'a supreme pastor of souls. His entire being breathed a burning zeal and an all-consuming love of the universal flock committed to him by Christ. So absorbed was he in the exercise of his pastoral office that his humility, simplicity and kindliness became dominant in a radiant splendour which'—the Cardinal says significantly, stressing the point we would make,—'which somewhat obscured other outstanding endowments of his wonderful character. . . . The spirit of poverty was closely united in the Pontiff with humility and simplicity'.[1]

Again, Monsignor Baudrillart gives his verdict. 'The Pontiff's look,' he writes, 'his whole being express three things: goodness, firmness, faith. Goodness was the man himself; firmness was the leader; faith was the Christian, the priest, the pontiff, the man of God'.[2]

There you have the heart of the matter in one almost casual but dazzling phrase: Goodness was the man himself! The very words echo the poem of John Donne about Our Lady, which concludes :

She is in Heaven for being good.

Yes, *goodness* was the man himself. Here in the dim crypt one can ponder long on all its shining facets. Even in his exalted

[1] Foreword to *Memories of Pope Pius X.*
[2] Revue Pratique d'Apologetique, Aout, 1914.

dignity Pius had, they said, the *majesty of humility*. He wrote what his poverty was in his last testament: *Born poor, living poor, dying poor*. His serene self-control and firmness are summed up in another accidentally eloquent sentence by some unknown diplomat: *. . . if this Pope has to say Non possumus, he will not shout it, but say it quietly and stick to it inflexibly*. His charity is set in a glowing sentence of Cardinal Merry del Val who knew him best: *his impulse was to give all he had.* But there are large books to tell all these things at length. Let us end with a last vignette. On the evening of his election to the Papal throne, Cardinal Merry del Val had to call to the new Pope's room. He found him, after the storm and stress, after all the unique pomp and panoply of the day, seated quietly at his desk, saying his Office before a little statue of the humble Cure d'Ars.

We rise from our knees and leave this eloquent tomb where Pius rests. His voice follows us in words we know: 'I would fain go with you to be ever at your side . . . but each day . . . we shall meet.'

Prayer is not only worship: it is also an invisible emanation of man's worshipping spirit—the most powerful form of energy that one can generate. The influence of prayer on the human mind and body is as demonstrable as that of secreting glands. Its results can be measured in terms of increased physical bouyancy, greater intellectual vigour, moral stamina, and a deeper understanding of the realities underlying human relationships.

If you make a habit of sincere prayer, your life will be noticeably and profoundly altered. Prayer stamps with its indelible mark, our actions and demeanour. A tranquillity of bearing, a facial and bodily repose, are observed in those whose inner lives are thus enriched. Within the depths of consciousness a flame is enkindled. And man sees himself. He discovers his selfishness, his silly pride, his fears, his greeds, his blunders. He develops a sense of moral obligation, intellectual humility. And thus begins a journey of the soul towards the realm of grace.
—Dr. Alexis Carrel.

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Revelations and An English Rose

Mary Jackson

One Sunday in May nearly six hundred years ago some strange things happened in then Catholic Norwich.

It was four o'clock on the morning of the 8th May, 1373, that a young woman of 30, perhaps already an anchoress, lay as if 'dead from the middle downwards,' propped up and speechless. Her chaplain set a crucifix in front of the dying woman. 'After this,' she writes, 'my sight began to fail, and it was all dark about me in the chamber, as if it had been night, save in the Image of the Cross whereon I beheld a common light; and I wist not how. All that was away from the Cross was of horror to me, as if it had been greatly occupied by the fiends.' Suddenly the pain and paralysis disappeared and for the next five hours there followed visions centering round that crucifix, and other more mystical and intellectual revelations of divine love. Then the pain returned, 'first in my head with a sound and a din, and suddenly all my body was fulfilled with sickness like as it was afore. And I was as barren and as dry as if I never had comfort but little.'

So great was the reaction and shock, apparently, that there was a momentary infidelity to the vision. 'Then came a Religious person to me and asked me how I fared. I said I had raved today. And he laughed loud and heartily.' But when she told him the content of her experience he was sobered, and she 'wept, full greatly ashamed, and would have been shriven.'

That evening she had a nightmare of the devil throttling her. 'And our courteous Lord gave me grace to waken; and scarcely had I my life. The persons that were with me looked on me, and wet my temples, and my heart began to comfort. And anon a light smoke came in the door, with a great heat and a foul stench. Then wist I well it was the Fiend. And anon I took to that which Our Lord had shewed me on the same day, with all the Faith of Holy Church (for I beheld it is both one) and fled thereto as to my comfort.' On the Monday night came a final revelation, and fifteen years later Our Lord spoke to her again, before she wrote, or dictated, the final edition of her book.

Today, in very Protestant Norwich, a hundred yards or so

from the riverside quay (vastly more busy in Mother Julian's day) stand the bombed ruins of the flint and rubble church where she was an anchoress, and the Anglican parson in charge, devoted to Mother Julian, declares the bombed church had a wonderful atmosphere of prayer. May be. Somewhere under the rubble and the tangled rosetrees are the foundations of the anchorhold, the room with three windows, where a line of anchoresses lived, but it does not seem very important. The room with three windows —one into the church, one into the churchyard at which the anchoress received callers, and the third into the room where her maids attended her—vanished sometime after the Reformation.

It is the Revelations that are important, for as Mother Julian well knew, they were not for herself alone; she was the contemplative who has to turn apostle too. 'In all this,' she says, 'I was greatly stirred in charity to mine even—Christians that they might see and know the same that I saw; for I would it were comfort to them.'

And her book shines more brilliant than ever today, so it seems with the joyous beauty of her teaching, and inevitably, of her own personality. 'In the world of today,' as Father Conrad Pepler, O.P., remarks, 'her message is needed far more than any other, for we are in danger of being crushed under a lethal pessimism which derives from the decline and degeneracy of our age, and which in its turn contributes to hasten that same decline. This depression leads us to wars and to individual human catastrophes of all sorts.'

Of course that series of revelations of that Sunday in Spring did not come to a soul unprepared. The young Lady Julian was already a soul of strong desires. 'I conceived a mighty desire to receive three wounds in my life: the wound of very contrition, the wound of kind compassion, and the wound of steadfast longing toward God.' It was a rich nature thus concentrated in this woman of tenderness, courtesy and gaiety; of sympathy, homeliness and candour; and of delicate and speculative intelligence. Womanlike, too, she will understand that we are first attracted to her teaching by its occasional sweet homeliness. 'Full glad and merry is Our Lord of our prayer.' 'And now I yield me to my Mother, Holy Church as a simple child oweth.' Extraordinarily attractive, too, is her constant reference to 'Our Courteous Lord.'

Perhaps she is most attractive and of magnetic strength, this

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woman at last, surely, high in the Unitive Way, for her final joy,—provided one remembers she had asked for suffering and a vision of the Passion and had had both. 'For it is the most worship to Him of anything that we may do, that we live gladly and merrily, for this love, is our penance'. Exquisite too, is her love of Our Lord's joy in us,—'we be not only His by His buying, but also by the courteous gift of His Father we be His bliss, we be his need, we be His worship, we be His crown'.

Constantly she supports us too, by her realism; during the visions for instance, 'I saw Our Lord scorn his (the devil's) malice and set at nought his unmight; and He willeth that we do so. For this sight I laughed mightily, and that makes them to laugh that were about me, and their laughing was a pleasure to me'.

Among mystical writers, she is probably unique in this homeliness and simplicity—and then what lights and heights Our Lord showed her for our comfort too.

'He shewed me a little thing too, the quantity of an hazel-nut, in the palm of my hand; and it was as round as a ball. I looked thereupon with eye of my understanding, and thought: *What may this be?* And it was answered generally thus: *It is all that is made*. I marvelled how it might last, for methought it might suddenly have fallen to nought for littleness. And I was answered in my understanding; *It lasteth, and ever shall last for that God loveth it*'.

Like St. Catherine of Siena, her contemporary, Mother Julian was shown the Sacred Heart. 'Then with a glad cheer Our Lord looked into His side and beheld, rejoicing. With His sweet looking He led forth the understanding of His creature by the same wound into His side within. And then He shewed a fair, delectable place, and large enough for all mankind that shall be saved to rest in peace and love. And therewith He brought to mind His dear worthy blood and precious water which he let pour all out for love. And with the sweet beholding He shewed His blessed heart even cloven in two'. Most famously of all, perhaps, Our Lord told her, 'It behoveth that there should be sin; but all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well'.

It is natural to lose sight of the teacher in the radiance of the teaching, but Our Lord was her teacher; and both the revelations and the twenty years' long meditations thereupon are drama

as when Our Lord tells Julian about her prayer:—'*I am Ground of thy beseeching: first it is my will that thou have it; and after, I make thee to will it; and after, I make thee to beseech it and thou beseechest it. How should it be then that thou shouldst not have thy beseeching?*'

We are given not a text book of mystical prayer but a story; including subsidiary visions, allegories, charming and homely similes, as well as the interplay of the mind of the Holy Spirit and of the mind of a speculative mystic.

But as Father Pepler reminds us 'her knowledge and sight comes, as her own title informs us, from the touch of love, from affinity with divine things. Her knowledge is an affective knowledge she has been led to see things in their highest causes'.

So it is a love story, as are all lives of the Saints, and this could hardly be made clearer than Our Lord Himself made it clear; 'fifteen years after and more I was answered in ghostly understanding saying thus; *Wouldst thou learn thy Lord's meaning in this thing? Learn it well; Love was His meaning; Who shewed it thee? Love. Wherefore shewed it He? For Love. Hold thee therein and thou shalt learn and know more in the same. But thou shalt never know nor learn therein other thing without end.* Thus was I learned that Love was Our Lord's meaning.'

This is a story, too, of irresistible poignancy for this generation for Julian says of herself, 'God brought to my mind that I should sin.' That twenty years dialogue and dialectic, then, of grace and nature, of God and man, was often preoccupied with the problem of sin, the mystery of evil; and again, Julian's teaching is both homely and sublime. 'Our Lord of His mercy sheweth us our sin and our feebleness by the sweet gracious light of Himself; for our sin is so vile and so horrible that He of His courtesy will not shew it to us but by the light of His grace and mercy'.

She has too, the bold originality of the very humble (like the child Bernadette).

'Thus in our Very Mother, Jesus, our life is grounded, in the foreseeing Wisdom of Himself from without beginning, with the high might of the Father, the high sovereign Goodness of the Holy Ghost. And in the taking of our nature He quickened us; in His blessed dying upon the Cross, He bare us to endless life; and from that time, and now, and evermore unto Doomsday,

He feedeth us and furthereth us; even as that high sovereign Kindness of Motherhood, and as Kindly need of Childhood asketh'.

Finally, she gains our total confidence,—to a sense of poignant companionship, in her so sound anchoring in faith. 'For above the Faith is no goodness kept in this life, as to my sight, and beneath the Faith is no help of soul; but in the Faith, there willeth the Lord that we keep us'.

Fresh as a mountain spring then, in the racy yet poetic English of Catholic England, comes the teaching of Mother Julian to us today. It is sparkling water drawn out at great price from the Saviour's fountains, however, and it is still—over five centuries,—presented to us to drink.

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STIMULI *by* R. A. KNOX.

Sheed & Ward. pp. 148. 10/6.

AFTER his leisurely progress through the Gospel, the Mass and the Creed, and the exquisitely slow motion of 'Enthusiasm' that was thirty years a-writing, it is understandable if Monsignor Knox alters pace now and sets his face against slow motion. *Stimuli*, which is a collection of 'lightening meditations', originally written for *The Sunday Times*, is a fast-moving book. Each of the seventy-one subjects is introduced, developed and applied in the space of four or five short paragraphs. To do this tidily takes great skill and if the preacher is to avoid making a bald assertion of doctrine, his approach must be fresh. Monsignor Knox never fails to stimulate our interest. He understands us and even as he charms and amuses, is quietly thrusting his goad deep, so that it always gets home and pricks the conscience. Whether he draws his theme from the liturgical cycle, the lives of the saints or the less obvious material of day-to-day life, he lays bare the central and basic thing in it. Thus, in talking of St. Patrick, he directs our attention to the essential ruggedness of the man's character: 'For the fiftieth time, you catch yourself wondering, Were they made of tougher fibre than ourselves, physically, those giants of old? Or did they lay too much emphasis on external activities, mistake means for ends? Or does Chesterton's *St. Francis* do well to remind us that the men of the Dark Ages were doing penance for the sins of paganism? Or does the complicated setting of our modern lives dispense us from imitating the heroic? Or are we, by and large, a poor lot?'

These quick sermons should be taken slowly, otherwise the pricks will develop callosities on the conscience instead of sensitiveness. Remember that they were written as Sunday sermons and that if read one after another they are bound to lose their impact. There will be readers who, having taken their daily twinge, will be inclined to read on intemperately, seeking thrills and yet more thrills. Beware of such reading. B.P.

GOD, SATAN AND MAN

By Bernard J. Kelly, C.S.Sp., D.D., D.Litt.

Clonmore & Reynolds. pp. 102. 4/6.

The sub-title of this book is *Satan the Adversary in Theology and Life*. Dr. Kelly has had the happy thought of gathering together the scattered sheaves of theology which deal with various aspects of what for human minds constitutes the mystery of Satan; he has made this teaching as practical for our spiritual life as he could. His book lacks the dramatic quality of the Apocalypse, but as a summary of Christian teaching it is adequate, if pedestrian, and it has the merit of an easy style.

There are four chapters in the book. The first chapter deals with Satan and God. Dr. Kelly first discusses, in a general way, the idea and the fact of creation. Then with St. Thomas he goes on to speak of the creation of those vast spiritual worlds or persons which each of the angels is. Lucifer, the highest of the angels, is seen as naturally the sublimest and most wonderful of God's creatures, whose role was to have been that of leader of the whole angelic world, and of man, on the way to eternal happiness with God. The testing of Lucifer is then described and the full tragedy of his fall is appreciated. Lucifer is now Satan—the Adversary of humanity on the road to God. The first chapter closes with a description of the part played by the Adversary in the fall of Adam.

Because he is now the Adversary of humanity, Satan is the enemy of Christ, the Head of humanity. In his second chapter, Dr. Kelly considers the efforts of Satan to destroy the work of Christ. The temptations of our Lord in the desert—a difficult subject—are considered in the light of modern exegetical scholarship. Then the part played by Satan in the passion and death of Christ is discussed.

In the third chapter, Dr. Kelly writes on the part which the devil plays in the life of each one of us. He is the Tempter par excellence, and though all our sins have not been the object of his careful and exact attention, there is no sin in which he cannot or may not, be interested. The devil's direct power over our bodies and imaginations is treated of and Dr. Kelly shows how

our minds and wills can never be directly influenced by him. The thought of Satan's ceaseless activity in the cause of evil should stimulate us to a corresponding activity in the cause of good. It can, therefore, play a part in our spiritual life by quickening our apostolic ardour. Dr. Kelly considers that it is helpful to loathe and detest Satan with a personal loathing; but he immediately qualifies this by saying that only love, the love of Jesus and Mary, will give birth to the highest fervour. Yet anti-Satanism, he remarks in the epilogue, may be a valuable spiritual weapon; and he has written his book, not as a theological treatise, but as a piece of 'spiritual writing' with a practical end in view.

Dr. Kelly does not condemn, he says, the study of dogmatic theology, but he thinks that few Christians are helped by the refinements of a subtle theology. 'Profundity delights him (Satan): the more profound and the further from daylight the better'. (p.73). While admitting, as Dr. Kelly certainly would, that Satan would probably be glad to see Reverend Mothers reading Cajetan, I think it is not impossible that it might be a bad day for the Church and for souls, were the Church's thinkers to lose faith in scientific theology. Actually this happened in the 15th century. 'I had rather feel compunction than know its definition,' wrote a Kempis in that sad late afternoon of the middle ages. But the 16th century brought a renaissance of vigorous metaphysical theology as well as a resurgence of vigorous Catholic life. It is not altogether foolish to think that there may have been some hidden connection between the two.

Scientific and remote thought may seem to the hasty observer to be ineffectual, but without it the life of simple souls would in the long run be impoverished. The Church is not just a society of persons engaged in saving their souls; it is a living body with a mind as well as a will and a heart. The mind of the church will always need profound and 'metaphysical' thought. Only a narrow pietism can say that 'much of it is of no value for the glory of God and the salvation of souls' (p.74). But then Dr. Kelly proceeds to give back with his right hand what his left has taken away. 'By all means let us continue our glorious tradition of Catholic thought.' Not merely one agrees 'by all means', but 'for goodness sake'.

In his fourth and final chapter, the author deals with Satan's

responsibility for many evil trends and movements, in the modern world. It is always tempting to find a scapegoat, but Dr. Kelly is quite well aware of the temptation and takes care to guard himself. Our own weak human wills are the first and principal cause of human sin. Our own proud darkened human minds are quite capable of devising false philosophies and religions. Our own disturbed emotional selves, are quite capable of extremes of anger and hate and luxury. Doubtless Satan is deeply involved in all these sins; Dr. Kelly suspects that he is involved above all in the sins of the mind and that in our time the diabolical activity is chiefly at work in the movement of atheistic communism. This seems very likely. All proud untrue thinking must certainly attract him whose sin consisted precisely in that. Dr. Kelly then describes other less spiritual types of sin in which the influence of Satan can plainly be suspected.

At a time when our awareness of Satan is more vivid than it was, a desire to understand something of his nature and activity is not uncommon. This little book will, therefore, satisfy a need. I doubt if it fulfils its author's purpose of providing an immediate stimulus for the will, which would seem to be the purpose of 'spiritual reading.' And viewed simply as doctrine, it is hardly concerned with the most inspiring themes. Nonetheless, it will be not without its own remote influence on the living of the perfect life.

W.B.

THE CASE OF THERESA NEUMANN

By Hilda C. Graef.

Mercier Press, Cork. 12/6

The case of Theresa Neumann, the stigmatized peasant woman of Konnersreuth, presents one of the most baffling subjects of controversy in recent times. For twenty-five years, the battle has raged and a veritable literature has grown up on the subject. On the one side we have in Catholic circles the convinced believers in the genuine and supernatural nature of the phenomena, of which view the Ritter von Sama, Dr. Gerlich and Archbishop Teodorowicz are the most notable exponents, while on the other side eminent Catholic medicals and theologians advise caution and

prudence, pointing out that a good deal in the manifestation at Konnersreuth, accepted by over zealous but perhaps inprudent Catholics as miraculous and divine, can possibly be shown to be of hysterical and pathological origin. The principal protagonists of this latter viewpoint are: (1) Dr. B. de Poray—Madeyski in his work, *Le cas de la visionnaire stigmatisee Therese Neumann*, Paris, 1940; (2) the Etudes Carmelitaines, and (3) Fr. Paul Siwek S.J., *Une Stigmatisee de nos Jours*, Paris, 1950. Miss Hilda Graef bases the book under review, *The Case of Theresa Neumann*, very largely on Nos. (1) and (2). Fr. Siwek's book which appeared subsequently, corroborates and agrees with Miss Graef's conclusions in most respects.

The most important feature of the case under review is undoubtedly the origin and authenticity of the Stigmata. Miss Graef indicates how the phenomena at Konnersreuth differ in very essential and important details from those recorded of the three canonized stigmatists of the Catholic Church—St. Francis of Assisi, St. Gemma Galgani, St. Catherine of Siena. These three saints received the stigmata only when they had arrived at a very high degree of sanctity, when they had achieved great perfection in the contemplative and mystical life. Nothing similar can be claimed for Theresa Neumann, either before or after the appearance of the stigmata. She rather proudly repudiates today, the suggestion that she is a 'Betschwester'—a particularly pious person. Previous to 1926, she had led the life of an ordinary good Catholic, accepting with fortitude and submission physical sufferings, paralysis, blindness and suppurating sores.

The next essential difference stressed by Miss Graef is that in the case of the canonized saints the stigmata appeared suddenly and all the wounds manifested themselves simultaneously. In Theresa Neumann's case the wounds appeared at intervals over a period of five weeks in the year 1926.

Finally, Theresa Neumann's condition, before 1926, was definitely pathological. Red serum flowed from her eyes, she was subject to convulsions, fits of rigidity and four German doctors signed a report in 1920, that she was the victim of 'very grave hysteria' brought on by shock.—In view of all these circumstances Miss Graef maintains the necessity of circumspection before the stigmata can be regarded as supernatural in origin.

Miss Graef then proceeds to an examination of the various visions attributed to Theresa Neumann. During 35 Fridays of the year, these visions take place. During them, Theresa is an active participant in all the scenes of the Passion from the Agony in the Garden, to the Death of the Cross. During these visions, which last from 11 p.m. on Thursday until 1 p.m. on Friday, the visionary would seem to have no knowledge of the real significance of Christ's Passion and Death. She constantly hopes and expresses the conviction that the tragic end will be averted. Miss Graef inclines to the view that a partial explanation of these visions may be Theresa's preoccupation with the sufferings of Christ during her five years of invalidism, with her reading of pious literature. She does not believe that the possibility of telepathic communication with Fr. Naber, Theresa's spiritual adviser and director for the last thirty-five years, who is always present on the occasions, can be altogether ruled out. Moreover, during Miss Graef's visit to Konnersreuth, the mother was constantly in the room and insisted at frequent intervals on all visitors leaving the room. We must, I fear, agree with Miss Graef that the whole matter should be investigated under more scientific conditions than is possible in the small room of Theresa's home, and that no definitive judgment on the phenomenon can be given until the granting of the request of the Bavarian episcopate that Theresa should submit to removal to a hospital for investigation. This request the Neumann family has definitely refused.

The Mercier Press is to be congratulated on having secured Miss Graef to carry out the investigations summarized in her book. Some of her arguments may not seem sufficiently warranted by the evidence at her disposal. She does not categorically state that the manifestations at Konnersreuth are in any way fraudulent. Both Father Naber and Theresa, she believes, are acting in good faith, but her conclusion is that it would be wiser to suspend judgment as to the supernatural nature of these extraordinary events.

Since the publication of Miss Graef's book, Theresa Neumann's mother has died. Good Friday, 1951, was the 25th anniversary of the appearance of the stigmata. To the disappointment of the 10,000 visitors assembled to witness the remarkable phenomenon usually manifested on this day, the bleeding of the wounds did not occur. Fr. Naber announced that Theresa had her visions

as usual, but all visitors were rigorously excluded from her room. Are we, therefore, to accept Fr. Naber's version that the usual manifestations were absent because this happened to be the 25th anniversary or are we to agree with Miss Graef's state of suspended judgment, or agree with Fr. Siwek's verdict: 'de miraculo non constat'? MARY BOYLE.

A TREATISE ON INTERIOR PRAYER

DOM INNOCENT LE MASSON
Burns Oates. pp. 36. 1/6.

THIS little work of a 17th century Prior of La Grande Chartreuse is a welcome addition to the excellent *Paternoster Series* of booklets on the interior life. Dom Le Masson was greatly influenced by the teachings of St. Francis de Sales to whom he constantly refers and whose wise and gentle spirit is reflected in his own writings. The earlier part of the present treatise is aimed at introducing people—of all sorts—to the practice of mental prayer. 'There is nothing so easy as prayer, nothing so possible for all kinds of people, whoever they may be.' In a clear, concise and homely style he gives much wise counsel on such things as the approach to prayer, the use of formal methods, distractions, the problem of progress. As an appendix to the main treatise, there are some counsels for more advanced souls.—D. O'M.

Books Received :—

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Clonmore & Reynolds. Francis Thompson: ST. IGNATIUS LOYOLA. 12/6.
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